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MMPI Profiles of a College Faculty Group

By THOMAS LORING APPLEBY AND CHARLES F. HANER

Differences between various educational, occupational and institutional groups and MMPI norms have been frequently noted. The possibility of using profiles on personality tests for vocational counseling has been explored by Daniels (2), Harmon and Weiner (3) and Verniard (8).

The characteristics of teachers, real and ideal, good and bad, have been documented by analysis of personal data, by tests, self evaluation, student ratings and experiences and surmise. Symonds (7) presents a series of such studies. Most of these studies have dealt with high school and grade school teachers or graduate students in education. Lough (4) (5) and Michaelis and Tyler (6) have administered the MMPI to teachers college students and education majors. The latter correlated MMPI scores with supervisors' ratings of the quality of the student teachers. The "good" teachers were significantly lower (5% level) on the hysteria scale than the "poor" teachers and were also lower on the psychopathic deviate, paranoia and hypomanic scales, though not significantly so.

The present investigation undertook to assess the personality characteristics of a group of experienced college teachers as measured by the MMPI. The aim was to determine if characteristic profiles existed which would supplement existing data on population sub-groups and which might serve as an aid in vocational guidance. Break-downs by sex and college division or department were planned.

METHOD

The majority of faculty members of a small mid-western college were asked to cooperate in this study. The individual faculty member was given the booklet form of the MMPI with a written or oral explanation and request for cooperation. Each took the test at his convenience. The anonymity of the examinee was promised. Each supplied information concerning sex, highest degree held and division in which he taught, but no other identifying information. Materials were returned to a mail box to further insure anonymity.

Returns were obtained from fifty-three male and thirteen female faculty members, or approximately eighty-eight per cent of the males and sixty-eight per cent of the females contacted.

A group of junior and senior students majoring in education or majoring in another field but planning to teach was also tested.

This group consisted of twenty-six men and fifteen women. The same testing conditions prevailed as for the faculty group.

RESULTS

Profiles of the T score means of the male and female faculty groups and the male and female education-student groups are presented in Figure 1.

The similarity of the profiles of the two male groups and of the two female groups is apparent. The two female groups appear to run rather consistently under MMPI norms, while the males run somewhat above.

Tests of significance were run between the T score means of the faculty and student groups and the MMPI norms using fifty as the normative mean and ten as the SD. Table 1 presents the means and SDs of the faculty and student groups, and the "t"s between the means and the normative values.

The male faculty group is seen to be significantly above the MMPI normative mean at the 1% level on the depression, hysteria and Mf scales, and significantly below on the psychopathic deviate and schizophrenic scales. They differ at the 5% level above on the paranoid and below on the psychasthenic scales. The female group differs significantly below the normative group at the 1% level on the psychopathic deviate and schizophrenic scales.

The male student group varies significantly above the normative mean at the 1% level on the depression, hysteria and Mf scales and at the 5% level on the hypochondriac scale. On no scales are they significantly lower than the normative group. The female student

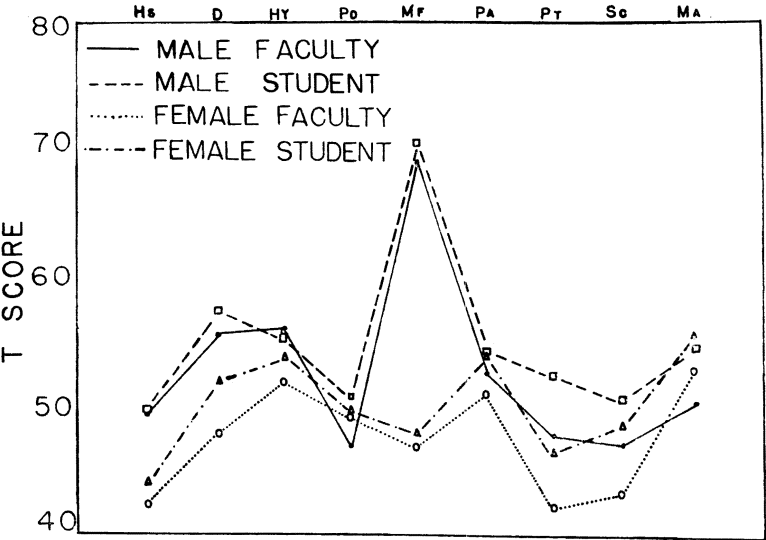


Figure 1. Profiles of mean T scores.

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Table 1

Means and Sigmas of Faculty and Student Groups and Significance of Difference from MMPI Norms

Scale	Male Education Student Group			Female Education-Student Group			Male Faculty Group			Female Faculty Group		
	M	SD	"t"	M	SD	"t"	M	SD	"t"	M	SD	"t"
Hy	49.6	5.3	.34	43.7	4.38	4.96	49.6	7.4	.04	41.8	4.3	6.3
D	57.3	11.1	3.2	51.5	6.24	.86	55.4	8.2	4.2	47.3	7.3	1.3
Hs	55.3	7.4	3.4	53.2	5.53	2.06	55.9	6.7	5.5	51.4	6.1	.78
Pd	50.8	10.1	.38	48.8	7.2	.60	46.7	6.7	3.0	48.6	4.7	.97
Mf	70.2	11.7	8.02	47.3	9.64	.99	68.9	10.1	11.3	46.9	9.6	1.06
Pa	53.0	8.8	1.67	53.2	6.70	2.10	52.8	8.0	2.4	50.5	6.1	.28
Sc	50.7	7.2	.45	48.8	5.56	.76	46.9	5.7	3.2	43.6	5.2	4.1
Pt	52.6	8.5	1.44	46.5	6.01	2.12	47.7	6.2	2.2	42.2	7.1	3.8
Ma	55.3	12.0	2.19	55.5	8.1	2.49	50.2	7.1	.02	53.3	8.1	1.4
	(N=26)			(N=15)			(N=53)			(N=13)		

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varies significantly above the normative mean at the 5% level on the hysteria and hypomanic scales and significantly below at the 1% level on the hypochondriac scale and at the 5% level on the psychasthenia scale.

Table 2 gives the breakdown of the male faculty members into several divisions or departments. No similar breakdown for the female group was attempted because of the small N and because most fall in one or two of the divisions or departments.

Some interesting observations can be made from the break-down. The physical education group differs considerably from the other groups, although the very small N makes the results unstable. They are higher on hysteria and hypomanic scales and lower on the depression and Mf scales. While all are high on Mf scale, the music faculty is highest. The science group is significantly higher on the depression scale than the other groups.

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Brown (1) has clearly warned against attributing psychological significance to statistically significant differences on the MMPI. He suggests that cultural and environmental conditions may produce differences among sub-groups which have no clinical significance. The same position is taken here.

The groups under consideration here are considered as select population sub-groups, and it is felt that variations from the normative pattern are explicable in terms of the nature and the training of the groups. The examiner interpreting test patterns must have knowledge of the population sub-group from which the examinee came and of its characteristics.

Table 2
Mean T Scores on MMPI Scales for Certain
Subject-Matter Divisions of the Faculty

Subject-Matter Area	Hy	D	Hs	Pd	Mf	Pa	P	Sc	Ma
Physical Education (N=3)	55.0	46.7	62.3	51.7	58.3	45.0	43.7	42.3	60.7
Science (N=10)	52.7	60.2	56.7	45.5	67.7	53.8	52.4	49.1	50.5
Music (N=6)	47.7	53.5	57.3	49.2	73.7	54.5	45.0	44.7	49.5
Other (N=34)	48.5	55.1	54.9	46.2	69.4	52.9	47.2	47.0	49.3

The very high Mf score of the men is perhaps the outstanding feature of the profile. The mean falls almost two SDs above the normative mean for the male faculty group. Examination of the feminine-keyed items of the MMPI suggests why. It is scarcely surprising that faculty men should respond "yes" to such questions as "I like poetry," or "I liked Alice in Wonderland' by Lewis Carroll," or to reply "no" to the question "I believe there is a devil and hell

in afterlife." Nor is it surprising that faculty men in music and language and literature should be more feminine in their replies than scientists, and that the physical education group should be the most masculine of all the groups. Even this small group, however, is decidedly feminine, falling one standard deviation above the normative mean.

The depression score for the faculty men is significantly above the normative mean and is highest for the science group and lowest for the physical education group.

Both the male and female faculty groups are below the normative mean on the psychopathic deviate scale, the men significantly so at the 1% level. In terms of the high intellectual, educational and ethical standing of such a group it is to be expected that they would adhere to the mores of the culture and profit from experience.

Most of the differences observed between the faculty and normative groups seem to be explicable and almost predictable. Likewise, the differences between the various divisions are to a large extent understandable in terms of the characteristics of the various academic duties and the people who would be attracted to the different areas.

The patterns of personality characteristics appear to be remarkably similar for the education students and the faculty members. Similar investigations of college personnel in other kinds of institutions would be informative and provide an interesting comparison with this institution.

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